



Unmasking Grief

Please Hear What I'm Not Saying

(author and source unknown)

*Don't be fooled by me; don't be fooled by the face I wear
For I wear a mask, I wear a thousand masks.
Masks that I'm afraid to take off, and none of them are me.
Pretending is an art that's second nature to me.
But don't be fooled, for God's sake don't be fooled.*

*I give you the impression that I'm secure, that all is sunny and
unruffled with me.*

*Within as well as without, that confidence is my name and coolness
is my game.*

*That the water's calm and I'm in command, and that I need no
one. But don't believe me. Please. My surface may seem
smooth.*

*But my surface is a mask, my ever-varying and ever-concealing mask.
Beneath lies no smugness, no complacency. Beneath dwells the
real me in confusion.*

In fear, in aloneness. But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it.

*I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear being exposed.
That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind, a nonchalant so-
phisticated facade to help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that
knows. But such a glance is precisely my salvation. My only
salvation. And I know it.*

That is if it's followed by acceptance, if it's followed by love.

*It's the only thing that can liberate me, from myself, from my own
self- built prison wall, from the barriers that I so painstakingly erect.
It's the only thing that will assure me of what I can't assure myself,
that I'm really worth something.*

But I don't tell you this. I don't dare. I'm afraid to.

*I'm afraid your glance will not be followed by acceptance and love.
I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh and your laugh will
kill me.*

*I'm afraid that deep-down I'm nothing, that I'm no good, and that you
will see this and reject me.*

*So I play my game, my desperate pretending game, with a facade of
masks.*

The glittering but empty parade of masks, and my life becomes a front.

*I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface talk. I tell you
everything that's really nothing.*

And nothing of what's everything, or what's crying within me.

*So when I'm going through my routine do not be fooled by what I'm
saying.*

Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying.